

# PRESS RELEASE

## House Armed Services Committee Bob Stump, Chairman

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### OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BOB STUMP ON MARK-UP OF HR 4547, THE COST OF WAR AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2002

The committee meets this morning to consider two bills --

- H.R. 4547, the Cost of War Authorization Act of 2002; and
- H.R. 5132, expressing the sense of the Congress concerning fiscal year 2003 end strengths.

The first matter under consideration is a bill to provide authorization for the remaining piece of the President's defense budget request for fiscal year 2003.

Members will recall that the President's budget contained an unprecedented request for the Congress to establish a \$10 billion "war contingency" fund that would allow the Department of Defense maximum flexibility in expending these funds to prosecute the war on terrorism.

In response, and I might add, with the strong reservations of a number of us on this committee, the House adopted a budget resolution in March that set aside \$10 billion of the defense budget in a reserve fund.

Members have in front of them a copy of the operative language of the budget resolution establishing the procedure by which the House would be able to consider authorizing or appropriating the \$10 billion fund. In sum, it requires that only legislation that provides new budget authority for "operations of the Department of Defense to prosecute the war on terrorism" will qualify to use this fund.

On July 3rd, the President submitted to Congress a request to amend his budget to provide a bit more detail on how they propose to expend these funds, but it would still essentially remain one large \$10 billion contingency fund.

Members will also recall, that when the committee and the House acted on the defense authorization bill earlier this year, we recognized that this approach would require that we split the defense authorization bill into two pieces. One would involve the requested defense program minus the \$10 billion, and the other would be the \$10 billion, which would follow at some later point.

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In passing the base defense bill, we also took preliminary action on the \$10 billion bill by authorizing about \$3.5 billion worth of programs that we judged to be more appropriately considered as part of the so-called "cost of war" fund.

Since then, the Senate has passed its version of the defense authorization bill and chose to include the \$10 billion unlike the House. So, at this point, we are disconnected with the Senate over this \$10 billion as we contemplate going to conference.

So all this background brings us to today.

The objectives of this mark-up are twofold. First, to preserve the prerogative of the Congress and the authorizing process by considering and issuing our recommendation on this remaining piece of the defense budget. And second, to move this bill through the process so that we can go to conference with the Senate with both sides having acted on the totality of the defense budget for fiscal year 2003.

I think it is fair to say that there is a wide variance of opinion as to the wisdom and merit of the Administration's proposal for a contingency fund. It is also fair to say that the Administration does face a significant challenge in figuring out how best to finance an unprecedented and difficult to define war on terrorism.

In a few moments, when we turn to consideration of the bill, I will offer a manager's amendment that attempts to bridge these disparate views and I believe provides a reasonable compromise among the competing concerns.

A copy of this amendment was provided to all committee members yesterday.

I will cover the contents of this amendment in greater detail when we get to that point in the mark-up.

Let me conclude with a couple of administrative notes.

First, as I pointed out earlier, the nature of how we got to this mark-up requires that we pay careful attention to the unique requirements of the budget resolution. Thus, any amendments involving additional funding must comply with section 201 of the budget resolution or else the bill is placed in procedural jeopardy.

Second, while as a committee we are normally accustomed to considering broad ranging defense legislation, the bill before us today is very narrowly focused on one purpose - authorizing funds for the DOD war on terrorism. Accordingly, members need to ensure that any amendments offered are germane to this purpose as amendments that go beyond this fundamental purpose will not be considered in keeping with the Rules and practices of the House.

Before proceeding further, let me now recognize Mr. Skelton for any opening remarks that he may wish to make.

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